



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

October 10, 2023

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

Over the weekend, the Iranian-backed terrorist group, Hamas, launched an unprecedented assault on Israel. To date, we know of hundreds of civilians who were brutally murdered. Dozens, if not more, have been taken hostage including American citizens. Now more than ever we must demonstrate our ironclad commitment to the U.S.-Israel relationship and our mutual stand against terrorism. The recent aggression by Hamas underscores the need to enforce our financial sanctions and deny revenue to the largest state sponsor of terrorism, Iran. Denying the Iranian regime funding means it has less money to spend on terror, missiles, and proxies like Hamas.

As you are aware, on September 11, 2023, your administration notified Congress that the United States issued a sanctions waiver license around August 9, 2023, to allow \$6 billion in Iranian assets held in South Korea to be released to Iran.¹ Nearly two months after Hamas's banker, Iran, received billions of dollars, Hamas launched a massive, unprovoked war on Israel. Arguing that these two events are unrelated strains credulity.

In addition, your administration has continued to allow the Iranian regime to evade U.S. sanctions by allowing them to move large amounts of sanctioned crude oil to countries like China with no repercussions.² According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, after the U.S. re-imposed sanctions on Iran's crude oil, their exports dropped from 2.5 million barrels per day (mbpd) to an average of 0.4 mbpd.³ During your tenure, Iran's oil exports have recovered to pre-sanction levels. According to the Wall Street Journal, Iranian crude oil production has hit 3 mbpd and oil exports are approaching 2 mbpd.⁴ Depending on the average monthly price and the purchaser, experts estimate that during your time in office, Iran has earned between \$81 billion to \$90.7 billion⁵ in oil revenues. If our sanctions are not enforced, we will give Iran more revenue to fund the regime's destabilizing activities.

I have advocated for transparency into the U.S.' sanctions waiver license process to ensure our economic and foreign policy goals are aligned and we are not giving rogue regimes, like Iran, resources to fund death and destruction.⁶

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/10/us/politics/iran-us-prisoner-swap.html>

² <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-08-15/china-is-buying-the-most-iranian-oil-in-a-decade-kpler-says#xj4y7vzkg>

³ https://www.eia.gov/international/content/analysis/countries_long/Iran/pdf/iran_exe.pdf

⁴ <https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/irans-oil-exports-have-soared-during-quiet-diplomacy-with-u-s-7a430a60>

⁵ <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2023/09/28/the-monetary-value-of-relaxed-oil-sanctions-enforcement-by-the-biden-administration/>

That is why I introduced the Banking Transparency for Sanctioned Persons Act, which you signed into law as part of the Fiscal Year 2022 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) (P.L. 117-263) on December 23, 2022. This law requires the U.S. Treasury Department to routinely report to Congress on any sanctions licenses provided to allow transactions between financial institutions and targeted individuals, like the waiver your administration provided involving a South Korean bank to allow for the transfer of the \$6 billion to Iran. It also allows Congress to request copies of licenses directly from the Secretary of the Treasury.

Due to the ongoing nature of the threat posed by Iran and its proxies and continued attacks against Israel, I request the following:

1. Any licenses provided to facilitate a transaction with the Iranian government, or any sanctioned person associated with Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah, or any other Iran-affiliated group in a similar manner as provided for under Section 5706(b) of P.L. 117-263.
2. A full briefing including background and context for the decision to issue such licenses.
3. A detailed plan for the full implementation of this law and how you plan to notify Congress of future sanctions waiver licenses in a timely manner.
4. A detailed briefing on how the U.S. has maintained strict compliance with all Iran related sanctions, including sanctions pertaining to the energy sector.
5. A detailed plan on how we will continue to enforce U.S. sanctions and ensure foreign countries are also in compliance with Iran-related sanctions.

Given the urgency of the situation I urge you to respond as soon as possible. Innocent lives remain in grave danger as Hamas attacks continue.

Sincerely,



BRYAN STEIL
Member of Congress